A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE ENGLISH NATION.

Thurſday, Auguſt 29. 1706.

IN the very ſtrange Subject of this Paper, I cannot but ſummon all thoſe Gentlemen to attend, who ſo frequently charge every unhappy Relation I give, with being a Deſign upon the *Church*, and an Endeavour to blacken the *Church* in reproaching Her Miniſters———Now, Gentlemen, ſpare me your Attention, and I ſhall give ſome Inſtances to the Honour of the *Church* of *England* Clergy; and to let you know, that I never believ'd they were all equally encouraging, or equally practiſing the vile Behaviour of the reſt.

I had indeed purpoſed here a juſt Encomium upon the Vice-Chancellor of *Cambridge*, and good Governing of that Univerſity, with a ſhort Hiſtory of the Treatment the Players met with here: in order to prove, that let Plays be never ſo innocent in themſelves, there is ſomething peculiar to them at this time, that renders them very improper for our Univerſities———And that even in the Judgment of the beſt and ſobereſt Perſons in the Univerſity.

I had purpoſed to have given Inſtances of ſeveral Reverend Clergy-men in ſundry Parts of *England*; who, in their Sollicitouſneſs and juſt Concern for the Glory of God, for the general Reformation, and for the Reputation of the *Church* of *England*, have ſtrenuouſly oppoſed the Players erecting Houſes, and ſetling their People to eſtabliſh Branches of their Fund of Debauchery, and ſpread the Manufacture of Hell thro' the Nation.

I had intended to have done Juſtice, even to *Oxford* it ſelf, and have told the World; how juſtly ſeveral Reverend Gentlemen of

their

that University were offended at the scandalous Encouragement given to the erecting the Stage in that City; and how on the publick Appearance of the Vice-Chancellor, and the rest, to have Sir *John Falstaff* acted there, for the Repair of the *Church*, several very eminent Men of the respective Colleges withdrew, that they might not be seen in an Action so scandalous to the very Being and Foundation of the University.

To illustrate this, I should have given some Account of the sad Progress this modern and surprizing Liberty to Vice has made already in that University, and I am told, I should but do Justice, if here I had acquainted the World, how much less the Appearance of the Students has been at the publick Prayers, since this *Play-house* has been open; how many are run in Debt, and how many have sold or pawn'd even their Necessaries——And not a few their Books, for Money to spend at the *Play-house* and its attending Circumstances, but I omit this at present, till I have the Particulars.

In order to move the Gentlemen concern'd in the Government of that University, to a just Sense of their Mistake; I should have given them a List of several young Gentlemen within my Knowledge, who being design'd for *Oxford*, have by their Parents Care, and by the Advice of some of their best Friends, been sent to *Cambridge*, with this unhappy but substantial Reason for it—— That *Cambridge* is by far the best govern'd University, and in particular, that there is no *Play-house* allow'd there.

I purposed to have taken up some Lines in an humble Address to the Gentlemen concern'd, to consider of what consequence in Time, such a Scandal may be to their University; and whither it may run, if not timely prevented, but I hope, they are too wise to need such a Subject should be enlarg'd upon.

I design'd to have vindicated this Paper from an unbecoming Arrogance, in assuming to dictate to the Instructors of the Nation, and to have been their most humble Petitioner for leave, to give the true Reasons of this Attempt.

But I am call'd off from all these most useful Heads, by a yet more unhappy Instance, of the woful Condition the publick Reformation of our Manners in this Kingdon is in, from the miserable Example of some, whose Duty and Character particularly summon them to correct others, and much more not to give fatal Encouragements from the scandalous Patterns in their own Conversation.

And this I shall represent according to my Title, as a due Encomium upon those Reverend and worthy Gentlemen, who publickly give the World a just Sense of their more sincere Discharge of their Duty.

The whole Affair is as follows.

The present Mayor of *Colchester*, a Person whose Worth and Character needs no Addition from my Pen, intending in the best Manner possible to celebrate the Action of Praise, on the late Glorious Successes of our Arms abroad, according to Her Majesty's Proclamation for Thanksgiving—— Appointed Dr. *Smithies*, a Reverend and worthy Divine of the *Church* of *England*, and Son to Mr. *Smithies* late of *Cripplegate*, to preach before him, which he did in a manner, as however cavill'd at, needs no Defence, but speaks for it self.

That however some Part of this Sermon, touching too nearly the Vices and scandalous Follies of some Men, gave great Disgust to such, as most Sermons on that occasion must offend; and particularly to a certain Gentleman, *of whose Character I shall say little*, only I am inform'd, *it would be a seasonable Advice to him, if some body would caution him not to pass for the greatest Swearer in* Essex; and particularly, *to forbear swearing in the Church, when the Minister is in the Pulpit*—This Gentleman send Dr. *Smithies* a Letter by way of Challenge, the same Day of the Sermon, to tell him, there would be a Repetition of his Sermon that Night at the *Coffee-House*, &c.

It cannot be wondred at, if this Novelty brought a great Crowd of the Inhabitants to the *Coffee-house*, some to defend, as well as others to expose the Reverend Preacher of this Sermon, and make Sport at the Thanksgiving.

What the pretended Repetition was, how frivolous the Objections, how ridiculous the Ban-

Banters, how unmannerly and unmanly the Inſults, tho' they may in time be made publick; they are not the Subject of my preſent Obſervation, they are treated by the Dr. with that Contempt they deſerve——But my Remarks are on the following Circumſtances, which then happen'd; the other being too dirty for any body's reading, and much below the Drs. Concern.

The Gentleman mention'd before at this pretended Repetition, let fly the *Fulmen Infernale* of his Mouth, and according to his Cuſtom ſwore ſeveral Oaths—Upon which a Neighbour ſitting by, and ſeeing ſeveral Clergy-men in the Place, and ſome by the way, whoſe Behaviour ſignified they were not diſpleas'd at the Pulpit being made the Jeſt of the *Coffee-Houſe*, *ſteps to one of them*; the firſt Part of whoſe Name is Mr. *Boutel*, and begun this ſhort Dialogue: *Sir, do you allow of ſwearing in your Company?* The Clergy-man anſwer'd, *yes; it is lawful to ſwear, if a Man ſwears to the Truth*—What, *here!* ſays another Perſon, *as well as in a Court of Juſtice? Why not*, ſaid a third Perſon, *as well here as any where, if it be true?* Then a fourth Gentleman ask'd the Clergy-man this Queſtion to bring him to explain himſelf: Mr. *Boutel, I was to Day at St. Peters, may I ſay* in common Diſcourſe, *By-God I have been this day at St. Peters*; the Parſon anſwer'd, YES, YOU MAY. At which the Dr. who had preach'd the Sermon, turn'd to him, and reproving him modeſtly ſaid, Mr *Boutel, are you not aſham'd to countenance common and prophane Swearing?*

This was but part of the Dialogue, and I withold the reſt with Reſpect to the publick Reputation of a Proteſtant Nation; only in general, the harden'd Wretch maintain'd this infernal Theſis ſo long, till ſome of his own Party began to bluſh for him, and at laſt took him by the Gown Sleeve, and turn'd him down Stairs.

Now to bring the Party and the Perſon of this Gentleman together, and withall that Men may ſee, how ſtrong a Connexion there is between the Regularity of their Morals and Politicks——This Champion of *Satan's* Kingdom, this Sollicitor for Hell, will let us know, he is a *High-Flyer* too; for at a certain Meeting of Gentlemen, when ſome of the Company drank Proſperity to the *Church of England*, this Gentleman pledges it thus; *Here's a Health to that Church of* England, *of which the Biſhop of* London *and the Arch-Biſhop of* York, *are Biſhops.*

This is juſt a Confirmation of that Remark, I have formerly made on this Account, *Viz.* That the *Church* of *England*, which theſe Gentlemen are of, and which theſe Gentlemen account the only true *Church*, is not the *Church* of *England* we talk of, and of which the Arch-biſhop of *Canterbury*, and all the other Biſhops have the Super-intendency, and over which Her Majeſty Queen ANN is acknowleg'd Supreme Head.

'Tis certainly ſome other *Church*, ſome Malecontent, Non-jurant Body, which theſe People mean, and which they reſerve their Thought for; when they name, pray for, or drink to the *Church* of *England*.

As to their Scandal upon the Biſhops of *York* and *London*, I leave them to the juſt Reſentments of thoſe Prelates for that Affront.

It is with Horror I write, and it cannot be read with out Abhorrence in every Chriſtian, that has the leaſt Sence of the deſtructive Progreſs of Vice in this Nation; How Men are ſuffer'd to wear the Habit of the ſacred Office; who, by their Employments, are the Churches Lights, the Nations Watchmen, and by Profeſſion are ſolemnly dedicated to the Service of Religion, and yet in their wicked Converſation, are Supporters of open Prophaneneſs, the Encouragers of Vice, and daily give Examples to the People, of the moſt horrid Blaſpheming their Maker.

Whether the Perſon guilty in this Caſe will take Shame to himſelf, and repent; God only knows, I wiſh he may; but whether his Superiors can diſcharge their Conſciences, in not giving him a juſt Reproof for ſuch a notorious Crime, I recommend to them to conſider; and only conclude with telling the World, a ſhort Story of my own remarking.

There has been in this and other Papers ſeveral contending Advertiſements between the Rival Claimants, to a certain Medicine formerly practiſed by the famous

Dr.